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A TRUE and AUTHENTICK
NARRATIVE

Of the Taking the Ship

NORTHUMBERLAND

By the FRENCH.

[Price Six-Pence.]

THE
NARRATIVE

OF THE
JOURNALS
AND
BY THE



[The British Museum]

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A TRUE and AUTHENTICK
NARRATIVE
OF THE
ACTION
BETWEEN THE
NORTHUMBERLAND

AND
Three *French* Men of War.

Describ'd in all its CIRCUMSTANCES.

With an Account of the Behaviour of Captain
WATSON, and certain Persons on that Oc-
casion :

Also a Relation of the Usage the *English* Prisoners met
with in *France*, and a Description of that Country
and People.

By an EYE-WITNESS.

L O N D O N:

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A TRUE AND AUTHENTIC

NARRATIVE

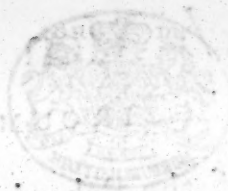
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LONDON

Printed by



A
NARRATIVE

Of the Taking the Ship

NORTHUMBERLAND

By the FRENCH.



OUR sailing in Company with the Fleet out of *England* under the Command of Sir *Charles Hardy* not being any Ways material, I shall confine myself only to the several Remarks that presented in that unfortunate Action.

MAY the 8th, being in the Latitude of 39 and 40, at 5 A. M. the Admiral made

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a Signal for the *Northumberland* to chase a Sail to the Northward; little Wind and hazy Weather; we crowded all the Sail we could set, but could gain nothing on the Chace; at 12 the Gale freshen'd, but could not come within Gun-shot. At Two the Admiral made a Signal to leave off chasing and come into the Fleet; the Captain was acquainted with it, and would not obey, I know not his Reason for it. About Three we had a hard Shower of Rain, with a brisk Gale and very thick Weather: At Four the Weather clearing somewhat, we lost Sight of the Chace, and discover'd three Ships steering to the Westward; two of them appearing to be large Ships of equal Force with us, the other a Ship of about twenty Guns. At about a League Distance on viewing them, the Master said, they were Strangers, that two of them were warm-sided Ships, and the other had a whole Tier of Guns; he persuaded the Captain to tack and stand for the Fleet, which he refus'd, saying, he was resolv'd to see what those Fellows were made of. He

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order'd to unlash the Guns and clear Ship, which we had not Time to do. On our bearing down to them, they immediately brought to under their Topfails, and hoisted *English* Colours: On our nearer Approach, they shifted to *French* Colours, and the headmost Ship hoisted a broad white Pennant, and run their Guns out: We bore down upon them so precipitately, that our small Sails were not stow'd, nor Topgallant-sails furl'd, before the Enemy began to fire on us, and at the same Time had the Cabbins to clear away, the Hammocks were not stow'd as they should be; in short, we had nothing in Order as we should before Action.

At Five o'Clock we came up with the *Content*, the Commodore, of 62 Guns, she threw her whole Fire small and great into us, without doing us any Damage: Our Captain would not stop here, nor take any Notice of it, he order'd to bear for the *L'Mars* of 64 Guns, which said Ship was somewhat to Leeward of us; this was a

great Miscarriage in the Action, for had we kept close to her, in all Probability we should have disabl'd her, before her Confort could have come to her Relief, and at the same Time been as prepar'd for the other; thus leaving her and bearing for the other, gave them the Opportunity of weering each other in the Attacks they made on us, and the small Ship to lie under our Stern.

ON receiving the Fire as aforefaid from the *Content*, our People gave three Cheers, and we began the Action by our Fire on the *L'Mars*; the Fire was continued by our People on the different Ships, as we could bring our Guns to bear on them. After some Continuance of Fire the Men were shot at the Helm, the proper Officer that should have been on the Quarter-deck to assist the Captain not appearing, the Helm was neglected, and the Ship for a Time flung us in the Wind, that she lay just expos'd to the Enemy to do by her as they pleas'd, either to take or leave, we not being able to bring again to bear on them, but when they
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rang'd up to pour their whole Fire into us. Toward Night the *L' Mars* bearing for us, it was thought she intended to board us; we endeavour'd to set our Main-sail, but were prevented, our Lee-sheet being cut by a Shot; being prepar'd by having a whole Broad-side, the same was sent at once into her; she being much wounded bore away and troub'd us no more, and prepar'd to receive the other Ship, who now began to attack us on the Starboard-quarter: This being the first Attack we had on that Side, their Fire seem'd no otherwise than to favour the Retreat of their Consort; the Night came on, we answer'd their Fire; it had continu'd upwards of three Hours, and all judg'd we had the best of it, when there was a sudden Call from the Quarter-deck, leave firing, we have struck, this occasion'd a great Consternation, no one would believe but that the *French* had struck, we seeing no apparent Reason on our Side for so doing. The *French* still firing, the same was return'd, and a whole Broadside was preparing, there was a second Call, with damn the Rascals

Rascals, leave firing and house your Guns, we've struck, I believe by the M---r.

THE Captain was brought just then mortally wounded from the Quarter-deck, and leaning against the Mizzen-Mast, the Master said, Sir, what will you do? For God's Sake consider your Men, they are all kill'd or wounded, we hav'nt a Man left to do any Thing, we have none but dead and wounded Men, we can do nothing, we lie here to be shot at, with many such like Words; the G---r begg'd in the like Manner, adding, we shall all be kill'd, they are going to rake us fore and aft, dear Captain *Watson* strike, let us cut away the Mast, we shall be retaken To-morrow, let us disable the Ship, which would have been put in Execution, had they not been prevented by the People. The Carpenter during this, came and reported that the Ship was as good as ever in her Hull, that she had not made one Inch of Water. The Captain would not hearken to any Thing, bidding to put the Ship before the Wind, and to keep to
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their Defence ; he was carried down to the Purser's Cabbin to have his Wounds dress'd, and knew not that the Ship was given up till he saw the *Frenchmen* on Board.

It can appear no otherwise but very plain to any one that hears how the Matter was, that the Captain never once thought of a Surrender of the Ship, for had he known when the Colours had been struck and consented thereto, there would have been no Occasion for the M----r or G----r to beg of him to do that that he had consented to before. The Captain was not in his proper Senses when the Action began, by reason of a Fall, in which he had fractur'd his Skull some Time before, his Mouth was drawn aside in a strange Manner, and a small Matter of Liquor render'd him quite out of Order, which was his unhappy Fate that Day, and exposing himself too publicly on the Arms Chest, became an easy Mark to be shot at ; by reason of his Wounds growing faint, he could not exert himself as he would have done, and having
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no Assistance from those that it was their Duty, he too late saw his Error.

THUS was given up to the Enemy one of the best Ships in the Navy of *England*, when there was no real Necessity for the so doing; 'tis true the Mate was wounded, the Sails and Rigging tore to Pieces, and about 70 Men kill'd and wounded, that was the worst State; on the other Hand, we had a strong brave Ship, no Leaks to stop, no Damage done to our Hull, we had Men left that were able and willing to fight her Guns, and would have fought it out to the last, had they one Officer in Post that would take Command, add to this it was Night, and so dark that the Enemy knew not that the Colours were struck; the People did, and would have continued the Action longer, had they not been forc'd to leave off, and the Enemy call'd to for Quarter, and to come on Board with their Boats, I believe by the M----r.

THE *French* declar'd to us afterward, that they did not expect we should strike to them, that the *L'Mars* had fix Feet Water in her Hold, and was going off; the *Content* was so tore to Pieces they had nothing to trust to, and those Guns that we were oblig'd to house loaded, would not only have clear'd us, but in all Likelihood would either have sunk or quite disabl'd the other. The *French* were very free, and said, that by what they heard and saw, they did not wonder at our losing the Ship, they said our Off—rs wanted B—.

IT was declar'd in *France*, and I hope it will be as publickly known to the People in *England*, that the Loss of the Ship was not owing either to the petty Officers or Seamen, and on the other Hand, it is as much to be admir'd at, that Men should fight with that Chearfulness and Resolution they did; considering the hard Usage they met with, but the natural Spirit of our People was so great, disdaining to be Prisoners

of *France*, that all Dangers were set at nought, and no Animosity once thought of.

WHEN the Enemy came on Board, they were surpriz'd at the few People they saw, and at the Defence that was made; for what with Sickness and short Complement, we wanted upwards of 130 Men in the Action.

AFTER the Action, the Ships were so shatter'd in their Masts, Sails, and Rigging, that they were three Days before they could make Sail, and 17 before they reach'd *Brest*: The Ships were bound for *Martini-co*, and had carried us there, could they have trusted to their Mast.

WHEN we were landed at *Brest*, the Officers were carried into the Town, in order for better Quarters than the private Men, and Horses taken up to carry them under Convoy to *Landeriffion*, a Place about seven Leagues in the Country, where it was said the Allowance would be better, besides the
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the Pleasure of a good Air and fine Country; but that was set aside by the L-----ts, who would not pass their Words for their Behaviour; they took Care of themselves, M---r, Sur---n, and Ch----n, with their Servants. The *French* said, if our Officers would not give their Words for us, they could not trust us on our own, and carried them close Prisoners to the Castle, where they were very exacting, making them even pay for Straw-beds to lie on, and those as had not Money lay on the Floor, tho' it was not long before they were remov'd to the New Prison, where they had Mattresses and Blankets to lie on, and a better Air; the Men were all in general put into a long Vault under Ground, and for some Time nothing but the bare Earth to lie on, so that they fell sick in great Numbers, occasion'd by the Dampness of the Place, Want of Air, and Badness of Provision; the Governor told the People on their Complaint, they were not brought there for their Pleasure.

THE *French* and *Irish* Officers came immediately among the People, and ask'd for the *Irishmen*; they drew them out as tho' they had been their own People: They then ask'd for the *Swiss*, of these there were three; the *Irish* for the most Part enter'd into their Service presently, those as stood it out, it was but for a Day or two, those they took about the Town, where they treated them, and a drunken Bout or two march'd them all clear away for the *Irish* Regiments; this hath been their constant Practice, not only here but in all Places wherever they carried us; at *Dinau*, of one Sort or other, they inlisted a great Number.

IN *September* the People were mov'd to *Dinau* in two Draughts: In the Country as we pass'd thro', the People for the most Part us'd us with great Kindness, and to our People that were most distress'd, were very charitable, getting Provisions ready against we came, for the Allowance from
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the *French* was but 6 *Sols* per Day, and of that they stopp'd a small *Moiety* for Straw. At *Dinau* the Usage in the Castle was much better than at *Brest*, there being Provisions enough, and one *Sol* per Day allow'd to pay for small Necessaries, as Washing and Shaving, and most of the petty Officers on their Words, was allow'd the Liberty of the Town: We remain'd at this Place till we were mov'd by Water, and put on Board a Transport for *St. Malo's*, in order for *England*, from which Place we sail'd on the eighth Day of *December*, after 7 Months Imprisonment, and landed at *Swanage* Bay, not being willing in our poor and ragged Condition to be put on board a Man of War, but to make the Condition known to the Lords of the Admiralty, which we humbly hope they will consider: This that is here presented is the whole Truth of what was acted, the Style being but in a mean Manner I hope will be excus'd; it is wrote by one who is a Well-wisher to his King and Country, and is,

With the greatest Respect, &c.

N. B.

N. B. When we were put on Board the Transport in the Road, it was by one hundred at a Time; the second Draught complain'd to the Master of the Vessel for Victuals: He told them, if they had done their Duty, they had not been there. The Men were so enrag'd, hearing it came from our Master, that they broke into the Cabbin with a Halter, and seiz'd the Master, giving him many threatnings, he begg'd hard of them to be pacify'd, and said he never spoke any Thing amiss of us; by much Intreaty he made some Peace, but about Eleven at Night he, the Gunner, and Carpenter, lower'd down the Boat and made their Escape.

THE *Northumberland* was reckon'd a prime Sailor, in our Fleet we had not a better, she being every Way answerable to the Weight of Metal she carried, being rated a third Rate; she mounted but 64 Guns, her lower Tier being 32 lb Upper-deck 18, Quarter-deck and Forecastle 9; but the *French* Ships that took her could
fail

fail round her, which was a Sight we did not expect to see.

SOME *English* Captains of Merchantmen that were there Prisoners, highly praise the *French* in the Building their Ships, their Bottoms are much finer than any they saw in *England*. At low Water at *St. Malo's* the Ships lie all dry, and they had the Curiosity to view them.

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POSTSCRIPT.

IT may not be amiss, 'tis hop'd, to make some Observations on what was apparently visible to all, and spoke of by many, at the End of our Journey.

THE Distance from *Brest* to *Dinaw* is 39 Leagues, and as the Country thro' which we pass'd all knew of our coming, so they appear'd more or less, according to the Bigness of the Places we pass'd thro'; we could be the more a Judge at the Misery of the Country by the Appearance of the Inhabitants. The Country is fine, and seems to be very little waste Land; but the Poverty of the People in the open Country is very great: Amongst Heaps of People, as we pass'd thro' the Villages, very few so rich as to be worth a Pair of wooden Shoes, the poorer Sort almost naked, and so exhausted of People, that there is hardly a young Man to be seen; old Men and Boys, with

with Multitudes of Women and Children, looking rather like Ghosts than living Creatures. Their Provision is very hard; I have been told by one of the chief Burghers, that some of the poorer Sort of People have not tasted a Bit of Meat thro' the Year. At *Morlaix* was the best Appearance on the Road, (that being a Seaport, and Residence of Merchants and trading People of good Fashion) but in that and the other Towns we pass'd, they too easily discover'd the heavy Burthen they groan'd under.

IN the Mayor Towns they rais'd the Militia for our Guard, but such in most Places as were never seen; they were hardy and able to bear the wretched Arms they were under; they were no Ways offensive, and on the other Hand, we were very peaceable. Many People cry'd when they saw us, as having some Friends of theirs in the like Condition in *England*; they were very charitable in many Places, as to providing the People with hot Pro-

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vifions, and helping the Sick. To give every particular Instance I cannot, one Thing is to be inferted, the Country is poorly flock'd with Cattle, and thofe very fmall, the beft as I fee is their Swine, which are much more cleanly than great Part of the People, and live in a far better Manner: For Sheep they are very poorly off, I faw under the Walls of *Brest* a Flock of about 20, moft Part black and brown, the Wool very coarfe; I do not remember feeing above one Flock more in all the Way, of about double the Number. We were ten Days on the Road before we reach'd *Dinau*.

ON coming to *Dinau*, and having the Liberty of the Town, I got fome Acquaintance; they told me, *France* was miferably impoverish'd, that the War had drain'd them fo of Men and Money, that they were in a Manner exhausted; that they were fo drain'd of People, that they had not Hands to cultivate the Land; they complain'd they had no Trade, that War was
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an unhappy Thing to Men, they wish'd for Peace; that thro' the Ambition of their ~~P~~---e, and by the Oppression of their ~~Cle~~---y, and the other Taxes, they had not Bread to eat. The Town of *Dinau*, I was told, is an antient Town, 'tis under a Governor, a Commissary, and Mayor; 'tis wall'd round, not after the modern Manner. The Castle, in which the *English* Prisoners are kept, is a lofty Building, oval in Form, and about 17 Fathom high: There are on the Walls several other Prisons, where they us'd to keep Prisoners; there hath been 3000 at one Time about the Town. For Trade, it consists mostly in Weaving your *Osnabrugs* for Exportation. Their Market is on *Thursday*, where they bring most Sort of Goods from the Country, it was much improv'd after the *English* came there.

THE Militia of the Place consisteth of one Regiment, they were twice drawn out during our Stay, on particular Occasions, the Regiment I think consists of ten
Compa-

Companies; I do not think they could draw 20 Men out of them fit to take the Field, nor was their any regular Forces appear'd after we had pass'd *Brest* all the Way. Our Allowance, to those that had the Liberty of the Town, was 4 *Sols* and a half *per Diem* to those that were belonging to the King's Ships. About a Fortnight before we sail'd, we were allow'd 5 *Sols per Diem*.

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